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UNCLAS ANKARA 004783

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SUBJECT: BAGHDAD-ISTANBUL FLIGHTS START UP

1. AFTER A FOURTEEN YEAR BREAK IN SERVICE, STARTING WITH THE SANCTIONS REGIME IMPOSED IN 1991, IN EARLY AUGUST THE GOT APPROVED AND INAUGURATED TWICE WEEKLY SERVICE BETWEEN BAGHDAD AND ISTANBUL ON IRAQI AIRWAYS. THE AIRLINE OFFERS THE ROUND-TRIP FLIGHT ON MONDAYS AND THURSDAYS. ISTANBUL HAS DIRECT SERVICE TO NEW YORK AND CHICAGO ON TURKISH AIRLINES.

2. THE GOT CIVIL AVIATION OFFICE TOLD US THAT IT PLANNED TO EMPLOY SPECIAL SECURITY MEASURES LIKE THOSE EMPLOYED FOR FLIGHTS FROM AFGHANISTAN. ARRIVING AIRCRAFT ARE REQUIRED TO PARK IN A REMOVED AREA AND PASSENGERS GO THROUGH DETAILED SCREENING BEFORE ENTERING THE COUNTRY.

McEldowney